

## **Town Administrator's Report**

**June 25, 2013**

The primary areas and issues in which we have been involved, since the last Town Board meeting, have been:

- Local Impact Committee
- Island School Re-acquisition

**Local Impact Committee:** The Wisconsin Legislative Council, a non-partisan research bureau, scrutinized 2013 Wisconsin Act 1 (the ferrous mining bill) to determine what rights local and regional units of government may have with regard to the potential development of the Penokee Mine. One of those rights/opportunities was the formation of Local Impact Committees (LICs) for the purposes of, among other things: recommending priorities for local action. Most important, the LICs have a seat at the table and compel the mining company to engage in direct communication/negotiation. LICs give local units of government an important direct voice in the mining issue.

On our own, we would have a difficult time establishing standing from which to have an influence on the course of events. Understanding the close and inextricable connection we have with the Lake Superior Chippewa Nation and, more specifically, the Bad River Band of Ojibwe, and the standing that Bad River has as a sovereign nation and that it is in the direct line of the devastation that the mine can/will produce, we approached the Band and proposed the joint formation of a Local Impact Committee with them. The Administrator had meaningful and productive discussions with the Tribal Historical Preservation Officer (THPO) of the Bad River Band. Those discussions centered around the potential strength a joint LIC would have and the fact that we possess different, but complementary networks and contacts – we are far stronger together than are either of us individually.

That initial discussion received an exceptionally warm and favorable response – the THPO immediately communicated with the Tribal Council which endorsed the concept and encouraged the THPO to move forward – that interest was communicated to the Administrator last week – only 3 days after the initial conversation. The Administrator advised/recommended that a release announcing the formation of the LIC be dispatched at the earliest opportunity to pre-empt any effort by the mining company to take action to avoid having to deal directly with LICs. The Administrator drafted a release which will be taken up by the Tribal Council next week – a copy of that draft is attached for the Board's consideration and approval.

As importantly, this joint effort has already had beneficial effects on the relationship between the Island and the Band – it has increased the level of trust and accommodation and has the real

potential to expedite the development of a collaborative and cooperative process and procedure for future developments --- the Band fully agrees that a collaborative agreement and understanding is far preferable to an interminable process and procedure imposed by the Corps.

**Island School Re-acquisition:** The Administrator met with Dave Aslyn, Superintendent of the Bayfield School District, in a preliminary discussion about the potential of the Island re-acquiring ownership and control of the Island School. The arrangement that was discussed involved the Island re-acquiring ownership and control from Bayfield and leasing back the school, for the education of Island students, for the same amount currently being spent by Bayfield on the school – with an accelerator clause which would increase the lease amount on an annual basis according to the Cost of Living or Consumer Price Index. The arrangement would be revenue neutral for the District and give the Island control over the land, building and contents as it may relate to Island activities, including use as a site for Community Center-esque events.

Supt. Aslyn was positively disposed to the arrangement and would integrate it into the District's strategic planning process which is currently on-going. His only concern was whether the transfer of ownership would have any affect on the leveeing ability of the District – although he did not believe that would be the case.

Discussions will continue with a target of late-August or early-September to have an understanding to bring to the Town Board for consideration.

Community outreach and communications indicates that there are mixed feelings, on the part of Island residents. One school (pardon the pun) maintains it is a great idea – another school is of a mind that it is better Bayfield maintain responsibility for physical plant repairs and improvements while the Island simply take advantage of opportunities for use. When some actionable understanding is developed – the Board may wish to hold a Town Meeting/Public Hearing to gauge prevailing sentiment prior to its ultimate decision.

**Beyond the two issues discussed above, we have also been involved in:**

- Preparation for the commencement of the Griggs Approach Project
  - 1) The Project should commence this week – concrete planks have arrived.
- Continuing work on Big Bay Town Park
- Preparation for the introduction of Tax Exemption Legislation in Madison
  - 1) Introduction was scheduled for after the Budget was passed – which has happened
- Continuing communication and outreach with community leaders, businesspeople and residents.